

The Beatrice Project: Zimbabwe

restoring dignity and opportunity

It is now over eight weeks since I last wrote to you. So much has happened (and yet for some of us very little has happened!) and the majority of us are still in lockdown. I know we are immensely grateful for the hard work and devotion of the Key Workers in our communities and are deeply aware of the suffering of so many people at this time. The news from Zimbabwe regarding Covid 19 is mixed: the people continue to struggle with confusing and often repressive political edicts, a lack of water and a severe shortage of food, made even worse by hugely inflated prices in the shops.

Our partners in Zimbabwe, Ntombu Nto, are managing to keep some aspects of the project going and are maintaining regular contact with the girls through the adult leaders. We are hopeful that, as lockdown measures are eased, production of the re-usable pads can be stepped up, using the sewing machines funded by TBP earlier last year. The girls are keen to get going on the second sewing machine which is now at one of the schools and which, once schools re-open, will be helping teachers to teach Textiles. There is also increased interest in the menstrual cups. Joy has not been able to deliver the disposable pads to the sites for 2 months now, and the girls and their mothers are increasingly keen to try the more sustainable cups. She recently told us, "The girls who got the cups are using them and are gaining experience as they use them more and more. Since many of them have no choice but the cups, they have seen how helpful they are."

Here in UK we, like all charities, are facing financial challenges. Regular donors are immensely helpful here, as we at least know a certain amount is coming in each month, and we would be delighted if there were any more of our friends who could support us in this way. However small the gift, being able to depend on its regularity is enormously helpful.

As you will know, we have been unable to hold any fundraisers since March (we have, in the past, run some sort of event each quarter) and our funds are running low. We have also, with considerable sadness, had to cancel our planned trip at the end of this month when we would have taken, amongst other things, the drawstring bags for the girls. These are being made by several of you now and we are most grateful. Anyone else with a sewing machine (and some skills!) who would be willing to make bags for us, do please get in touch. As wearing masks is likely to be the socially acceptable thing in UK soon, Karen has started to make face masks in return for a donation to TBP. Do contact us if you would like to place an order.

Whilst being aware that, for some of you, this period of lockdown has brought with it financial struggles, we want to ask if you could give a donation, to the project, to enable us to continue the work in Zimbabwe. Although costs and rates of exchange are shifting almost daily, we estimate that a donation of £15 would provide a cup, and training in its use, for one girl. Similarly, £10 would enable a girl to make her own set of re-usable cloth pads. Perhaps you could bear this in mind.

If you would like to give, please visit www.give.net/20237532. If you are a tax payer, we are able to claim gift aid on your donation. Using the Stewardship site helps us to do this easily and efficiently, and is our preferred method. Alternatively, you may wish, in the current circumstances, to give directly into our bank account at Barclay's Bank, Sort Code: 30-79-31, Account number: 93590631

As Adrian Thomas comes to the end of his term as a Trustee, we are delighted to welcome to the board Roger Snowden and Tony Arthur. We know they will both bring a great deal to the work of the project in terms of skills, knowledge and wisdom and would like to express our gratitude to them.

Once again, thank you so much for your support. Stay safe and well everyone!